

Bonanza Mine

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve

National Park Service
US Department of the Interior



The Bonanza Mine is the most straightforward of the historic Kennecott Mines to visit. Many of the mine buildings are still standing and evidence of mining litters the landscape. It is a place where one's imagination might run wild wondering what a miner's life might have been like high on the ridge. It is also a place of spectacular vistas of the Wrangell, Chugach and St. Elias mountains.



Maps: Trails Illustrated WRST map

Distance: Approximately 9 miles round trip, 3,800 feet elevation gain from the Kennecott Mill Town to the Bonanza Mine

Difficulty: Straightforward but strenuous

Route:

To reach Bonanza Mine from the Kennecott Visitor Center walk through the Kennecott Mill Town towards the Root Glacier. About a half mile beyond the visitor center the road will split. The trail to the Root Glacier will continue out along the glacier edge. To get to the Bonanza Mine turn right and start up the hill. At the top of the first switch-back turn left following the road up the hill. If you reach the top of the mill building, you missed the turn. This road, constructed by Wrangell Consolidated in the 1950s and 1960s was an unprofitable but industrious effort to extract the remaining copper ore from the Bonanza Mine site. It goes almost to the mine itself. Follow this road approximately 3.5 miles to the breakover tram tower. On a clear day, spectacular vistas of the Chugach Mountains, Mt. Blackburn and the Kennicott Glacier can be seen from almost the entire route, particularly from above tree line. The road is steep, climbing 3,800 feet from the mill town to the mine buildings.



The Bonanza Mine buildings can be seen from the breakover tower. Follow the path that continues towards the mine buildings from the tower. This path is steep and loose in places. The historic site at the Bonanza Mine begs for exploration as one might imagine miners living and working high on the ridge line. Please explore the area with care being mindful of the hazards that exist and taking care to leave things as you find them so that others may explore the Bonanza Mine in the future. The entrance to the mine has been restricted for your safety. When Kennecott closed the mine in 1938, the company pulled out the support system in the mine in order to process the high grade copper ore it was made of. The mines are unstable and prone to collapse. For a spectacular view of the University Range in the St. Elias Mountains continue beyond the mine buildings to the top of the ridge.

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Hazards:

Mining and explosives experts have combed the historic mine structures in an effort to remove any abandoned explosives. However, if you find any abandoned explosives **DO NOT TOUCH** them. Please report them to a park ranger as soon as possible.

The buildings at the Bonanza Mine have not been stabilized and historic artifacts are scattered on the landscape. Please do not enter the buildings and explore the site with care.

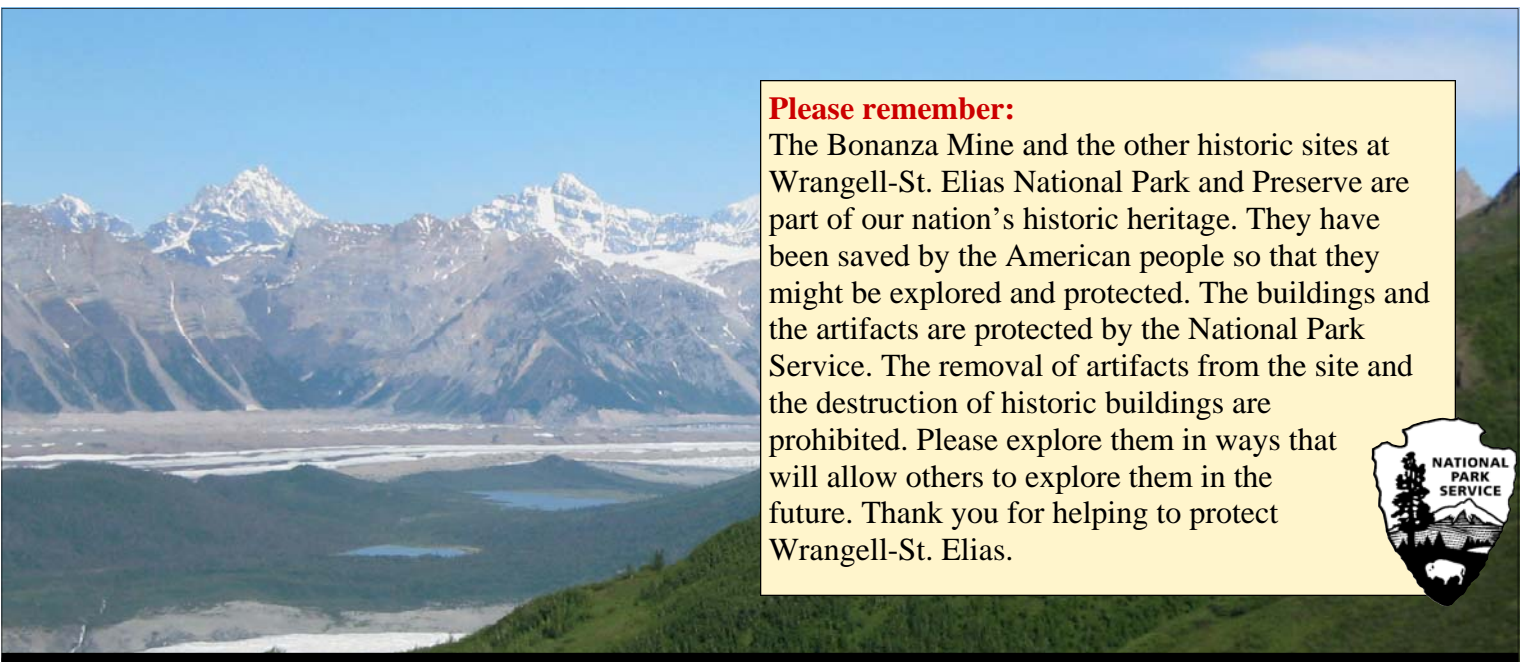
The “glory hole,” one of Kennecott’s most prized ore bodies, was mined starting at the ridge behind the mine buildings and is apparent from the yellowish colored pillars of rock still standing. Be careful in this area as the rock may be unstable.



Ruins in upper basin

Bears are frequently seen along this route. Take standard precautions for hiking in bear country. Talk with a ranger

Note: This is NOT a recreational ATV route. ATV access to this area is limited to private property owners along the route and their guests in the process of accessing their property. If you are traveling with an ATV please leave it at the Kennicott River and visit the mines on foot.



Please remember:

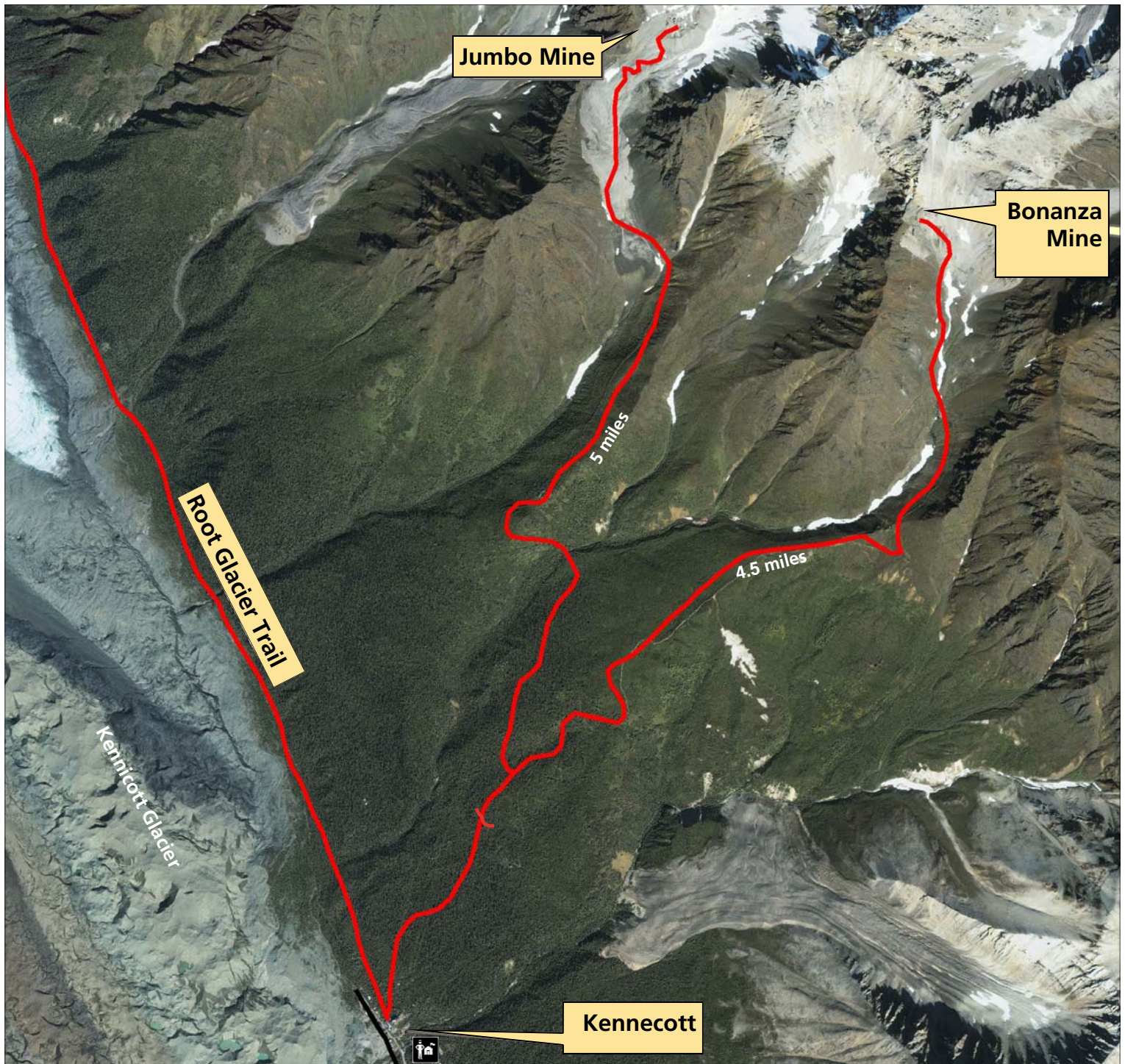
The Bonanza Mine and the other historic sites at Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve are part of our nation’s historic heritage. They have been saved by the American people so that they might be explored and protected. The buildings and the artifacts are protected by the National Park Service. The removal of artifacts from the site and the destruction of historic buildings are prohibited. Please explore them in ways that will allow others to explore them in the future. Thank you for helping to protect Wrangell-St. Elias.



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Air photo of the trails to the Bonanza and Jumbo Mines